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ABSTRACT

Information on establishing and running a free university is presented in this handbook. A free university is defined as an organization offering ungraded, unaccredited classes, activities and programs to the general public. Information on starting the free university includes: how to determine the needs of your community; deciding on a name and location; and how to organize the university. The role of the free university coordinator is discussed. Legal aspects (incorporation, tax-free status) and funding are also considered. Advice on course length, finding teachers, catalog information, and registration procedures is presented. The importance of good publicity is emphasized. It is suggested that followup and evaluation proceedings be implemented to maintain the quality of the university. (SF)

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How to Start a Free University

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WE 010 906

by **Greg Marsello**

Introduction

Free universities have proven to be viable educational alternatives. They offer adults a chance to share their own skills and interests, as well as learn new skills and explore new interests.

There are more than two hundred free universities in the United States. Some are located on campuses, some are sponsored by community agencies, and others are independent organizations. Free u's can be found in large cities as well as small rural towns. Free universities are conceived when people feel there is a need for cooperative learning and sharing on a community level. People have begun to take learning into their own hands, and free u's are one excellent way people can attain a goal of self-directed community based education.

Each day people write existing free universities and the Free University Network with regard to starting a free u. This booklet arose from the need to inform interested people about the important aspects of starting a free university.

HOW TO START A FREE UNIVERSITY

by Greg Marsello

with thanks for review and comment to
Bill Harley and Bill Draves

THE FREE UNIVERSITY NETWORK
1221 Thurston
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This manual is dedicated to my free university companions, Melinda Foley, Bill Harley and Debbie Block.



"How To Start A Free University" was written to offer people direction with regard to starting a free u. Starting a free university is not a difficult task, but it is important to be aware of the different aspects that should be included when considering the design and running of a free u. This booklet contains tips on structure, publicity, catalog design, and much more.

I would suggest that you read through the whole booklet, and then apply your newfound knowledge to the situation you are in. For more information on setting up a free u., write the Free University Network or other existing free u's. Reading other catalogs is a great way to learn how to improve and expand your program.

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PLANNING

The Beginning

ADULT EDUCATION

"The stir over adult education has come about recently. Several trends have caused the interest. The number of college students will be declining in the coming ten years, but the percentage of adults will be increasing. Thus, the average age of the population will rise and more people will be working than in previous years. Adults today are taking more night classes for personal growth. This explosion in night classes has come about in the last ten years, and free universities are obviously participating in this explosion." (Free University News, March, 1977)

Adult education is an umbrella term that has been used to describe all the ways adults seek to continue their education, which includes formal and informal study, group instruction and self-directed study, learning ventures for professionals as well as illiterates. It is not restricted to just traditional educational settings and requirements.

It is important to be aware that the learner participating in adult education activities is doing so on a part-time or temporary basis and is normally engaged full-time in work or something else. A free university offers adults a chance to take low cost courses at a time and place that is comfortable and convenient to the adult. A free u. asks the adult to take learning into his/her own hands. Adult education, free university style, is a choice, not a requirement.

A FREE UNIVERSITY - IN BRIEF

The Free University Network, the national association of free universities, defines a free u. as an organization offering ungraded, unaccredited classes, activities and programs to the general public. Anyone can volunteer to teach a subject, lead an activity, or coordinate a program, and the learning content and procedure is entirely up to the facilitator and learners.

The free university seeks facilitators; prints a brochure of classes, activities and programs with descriptions, times and meeting places; registers learners; and evaluates the session. Classes, activities and programs take place in homes and other informal settings, and the actual learning is left up to the participants and leader or teacher.

Courses may include any topic, such as arts and crafts, intellectual subjects, practical skills, or societal issues. A basic educational philosophy of free u's is "anyone can teach and anyone can learn."

HISTORY

The first free university started in Berkeley, California, in 1964, as a result of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. Free u's initially were started across the nation on college campuses as a reaction against traditional education.

They arose out of the need to discuss and learn about social issues; out of a sense that education should also be community; out of a belief that education is inherently democratic; and that students should have input in learning situations.

Following the campus activism of the 1960's, free u's began to involve community people and working adults. Today free u's see their mission as being community organizations serving all the people in the community: workers, housewives/husbands, farmers, elderly, and children.

Background Work

A free university is easier to start than maintain, and most free u's are usually conceived by a small number of people; often from one to no more than three or four. These people get together, decide there are services they want for their community not already available, and develop the idea of cooperative learning and sharing to meet these needs.

Before you have decided your free u. goals, broaden your thinking by making contacts in the community and finding out what other people feel about what the community needs. Talk with community people and have them pin point their needs; what do they see as lacking in the community?

In the beginning, it is important to do a community profile. It can be very helpful if you know the age distribution of the population; the educational level of the area; the types of employment represented in the community; the distribution of the population by sex and ethnic background; and what kinds of clubs and organizations are represented in the community. It also helps to be aware of community problems; these are also your problems.

If you can meet with representatives of these areas, they might be able to help define local interests. Visit with various local leaders to get their input. Or hold an open community meeting. The process will help you to meet people and gain support, as well as gather suggestions.

The most successful free universities have been the free u's which have been sensitive to the people. Free u's that dictate what people should learn or be concerned with usually have a difficult time staying alive. You are setting up a community based free university, so let the community help decide what the free u. should be doing.

It would be helpful if, after these initial meetings, you could establish a set of goals for the free u. based on the community profile and the problems and interests of the people in the community. This statement of goals can be printed up and serve as a definition of your purposes and services, and can be handed out to interested people.

Location

Are you going to be a campus free university, or a free u. geared towards non-student community members? Are you trying to reach your whole city or just certain people? It is important to decide who your target audience is going to be.

There are several kinds of free universities. Some are sponsored by a traditional university or college, usually as part of the student government or continuing education department. Others are community based, sponsored by an organization such as a YMCA, library or recreation commission. Still others are independent, separately incorporated as non-profit organizations with a board of directors.

If you are working in a small community, you may feel that you can offer a program that can involve everyone, but you must remember that the gas station attendant may not have the same interests as the farmer. You will probably be most effective if your free u. is not limited to one emphasis (for example, crafts). Even a small town consists of a wide range of wants and needs. If you are working in a large city, you may want to focus on one section of the city, or one audience.

If you are more interested in providing learning for non-student community members, plan your initial background work and organizational meetings off-campus and in the midst of the population you want to affect. You will probably be most successful if your base is on the home ground of your target population.

Name

Jane Lichtman, who did a survey of free universities in 1971, says "the name should describe what you are doing and be easy to remember and be brief." Most free universities label themselves as "free university" or "experimental college," and these names can be very catchy, but often times these labels can be misleading to the people you are attempting to reach.

Lichtman also states that you should "try to find a name that mirrors your visions." You want a name that will attract people, and be a name people can relate to. It is their free u. The following are examples of names now in use: Communiversities, Orpheus, Common Ground, The Learning Center, Open University, Open Education Exchange, The Skills Exchange, Community Education Program, Free School, The Forum, and Class Factory.

Structure

Bill Draves, national coordinator of the Free U. Network, states that "There has been much discussion as to what a free university is or should be. Many people have an image of a free u. which may be accurate for one free u., but not for others. Thus it is helpful to describe the major types of free u's in existence today, pointing out the differences, even though each organization is distinct and responds to its own local situation."

The commonly accepted definition of a free u. is that it is an organization offering ungraded, unaccredited classes to the general public in which any person can teach and any person can participate.

Within that definition, Draves sees six basic kinds of free u's in evidence today, with two differentiating criteria:

- 1) Location - Is the free u. on the campus of a traditional education institution, sponsored by a community agency, or independent;
- 2) Cost - Does the free u. charge a fee?

From these criteria, six models of free u's are derived:

- a. campus, no fee
- b. campus, fee
- c. community, fee
- d. community, no fee
- e. independent, no fee
- f. independent, fee

The following is an excerpt from an article by Bill Draves reprinted from the January, 1977, issue of the Free University News.

When free u's first started in 1964 the location of the organization was predetermined - on campus. Almost all of the free u's were originally located on the campus of a college or university and were seen as supplements or change agents to the traditional post-secondary institution. This situation existed until around 1971, when some free u's began to move off campus and others started in the community.

At present, one-third of the free universities and almost all of the free u's in large metropolitan areas are community based. There is a trend toward a community orientation, whether that means merely more community participants are coming to the campus-based free u., or that the free u. is organizationally community based.

The campus based free u. is typically run by students as a campus organization, often sponsored by the student government or student activities center. There may be a work-study student or a student paid part-time salary, a secretary, and student volunteers. The free u. makes use of a campus office, classroom space, printing facilities, and funding. Arguments for a campus based free u. include the case that resources should be tapped at the traditional university (Clinton Free School, New York) and that the free u. should attempt to change the university, the dominant institution (Center for Participant Education, Tallahassee, Florida).

The community based free university appeals to the general public, high school students, working people, senior citizens and students. Community based free u's evolved out of two historical phenomena: 1) the temporary rise of the counter-culture in which alternative institutions were established, and 2) the permanent increase in adult education and the desire for lifelong learning opportunities based on skill and content rather than accreditation.

Most community based free u's are independently incorporated non-profit organizations, while others are sponsored by a variety of community organizations, such as the public library, social change organization or social service agency.

One argument for basing the free u. in the community is that the free u. needs to be organizationally independent from a college that may restrict its growth or influence its potential. Another is that if learning and living are really intertwined then the free university should be in the community rather than enhancing the separation of education from life in the "ivory tower" of the traditional institution.

A second criteria for a free university is whether or not there is a cost involved. A minority of free u's prefer not to charge anything for a course- no registration fee or instructor fee. The basis for this is mostly philosophical with the basic argument given that education should be for no cost. The no cost concern has several roots.

One is that the learning should be available to low income people, and the way to insure everyone can afford learning is to make it free. Another root is the belief that learning should be shared for free and that paying teachers contaminates the teaching/learning situation. A final concern is to eliminate the concept of professional teachers, one who earns a living by teaching. If anyone can teach, then all should be able to offer their skills and this implies a no cost situation.

The no cost free universities take one of two routes to survive financially- either by existing through an education institution and grants from outside resources (University for Man, Manhattan, Kansas), or existing in the community as a no-budget free u (Beacon Hill Free School, Boston). The no-budget free u. survives off of volunteer effort and less than \$100 for miscellaneous expenses.



The argument for cost, either a registration fee or a registration fee plus an instructor fee, has its basis in economic necessity and educational philosophy. Many free universities charge a registration fee so that they can stay alive as an independent organization. Some free u's allow their instructors to charge a fee in order to attract high quality or high demand teachers.

And finally, some free u's allow teachers to charge in order to promote the livelihood of the non-accredited teachers of skills and knowledge. Many more free universities today are concerned with establishing a firm financial base in order to gain permanency and extend their offerings throughout an entire community or metropolitan area. Being able to charge allows for growth. Free u's that charge are found on campus (Experimental College, Davis, California) and in the community (Denver Free University).

Another characteristic of free u's is the degree to which they are outwardly political. This aspect is not nearly as discussed now as it was around 1970, as a great majority of free u's are now outwardly nonpolitical.

The term political is in itself confusing and possibly misleading. It is used here as meaning social change oriented with regard to course content. Some free u's consider themselves political without advertising the fact. Some free u's regard their mere existence as political, while others feel that the educational process is political regardless of course content.

Thus, in the mid and late 1970's most free u's have a radical educational process with only a small proportion of courses being concerned with societal issues.

In understanding these models it is important to realize there are different kinds of organizations who call themselves free universities. All of them are free u's but each is responding to a local situation and has developed a different structure within the broad context of "anyone can teach and anyone can learn."

The Coordinator

The role of the free university coordinator is exciting, but also demanding. You must be sensitive to your community and its needs, but you also must be aware of your limitations as a person. Essential to the future of the organization is a coordinator with some personal commitment to the free u. A dedicated staff is the core of a successful operation.

The coordinator(s) must be able to communicate with others. Weekly staff meetings are very helpful. At the staff meetings you can talk out problems and come up with shared decisions. Try to set up a staff structure and decision making process that all the staff is comfortable with, and one that gets the job done.

If there is more than one paid coordinator, a staff structure is needed. Some free u's rotate head coordinators, some work as a collective without a head coordinator, and others pay a person to be head coordinator. You choose the system that best fits your situation.

Philosophy

The educational philosophy of the free university is summed up by the slogan "anyone can teach and anyone can learn." All of us have some kind of skill, knowledge, experience or idea to share with others. America has had a rich tradition of citizens sharing knowledge with each other, a tradition which originated with the First Amendment Right to freedom of expression. The free u's uniqueness is this utilization of citizen participation in learning and sharing.

Learning in a free university can be exciting, informal and enjoyable. Unhampered by grades, tests or pressures, people are encouraged to be self-directed learners. There are many reasons why people participate in a free u. class, activity or program. Some come to meet new friends; to socialize; to save money on a repair class; to learn about a job or career; to work on a project; to be involved in community affairs or social change; and of course, just to learn.

While free u's offer many leisure classes, they also offer classes in vital skill areas that adults need and want. For example, courses are offered in practical skills, business and economics, fine arts, personal growth, interpersonal relations, community issues and the environment.

It is important that your free university have an educational philosophy, and that you make the philosophy known.

Incorporation

Jane Lichtman comments, "If free universities were small, isolated, self-contained rural communities, they would not need to become involved with the legalities of the larger society. But since they're not, some attention should be given early to the legal complications that arise in dealing with larger groups of people. Two pertinent legal statuses, incorporation and tax exemption, are worth investigating."

You should make friends with a lawyer, one who is sympathetic to your cause. S/he can take care of the legal papers, but if you have the time and cannot find a lawyer who will work for free, you can perform this task yourself. Write an existing free university and ask for a copy of the incorporation papers.

The following are Jane Lichtman's thoughts on incorporation and non-profit status.

"Incorporation does two important things: 1) it limits the liability of individuals involved in the free university with respect to damage and debt collection; and 2) it makes the organization eligible for nonprofit status and therefore tax-deductible contributions.

"Corporations are chartered by the state. Each organization which wants to become a corporation files two forms: articles of incorporation and by-laws.

"The articles require the name and location of the corporation, names of incorporators, and a statement of purpose. Be sure to include in the articles the statement that the corporation is organized solely for nonprofit purposes.

"The by-laws require that the authority of the corporation be delegated to officers and to a board of directors. By-laws describe how, in particular, the purposes are to be carried out.

NONPROFIT STATUS

"Once you're incorporated, apply for nonprofit status as a 'clearinghouse to bring together instructors and interested students in a community for purposes of instruction.' If you are approved later as a tax exempt organization, the free u. is exempt from federal income taxes. Donations given to the free u. are tax-deductible to the donor.

"Apply for both state and federal nonprofit status at the same time. State status is generally gained quickly; federal takes longer. Apply early for the federal nonprofit status through the Internal Revenue Service."

Facilities

The three necessary items to start a free university are:

- 1) a phone
- 2) an office
- 3) a mailing address

A phone and office are necessary in order for people to get in touch with you. Most free universities have found it imperative to have a mailing address, i.e., office address or post office box.

Office hours are difficult to maintain, so it is financially more feasible for new free universities to start by utilizing another organization's office and phone number. Some free universities are based out of a staff member's home, and they use an answering service on their phone. Other free u's start as a project of a community center, church, traditional educational institution, or community organization.

Money

Money is not a big barrier to starting a free university. Start up money is needed for your first catalog. Depending on how fancy your brochure is, a free u. can be started with from \$20 to \$200.

But as the free u. develops, establishing a financial base becomes more important, especially when you need a paid coordinator. From the beginning, you should be thinking about a financial base.

Three basic types of free u's and their sources of income are:

- * campus sponsored- student government, continuing education and related college sources;
- * community sponsored- agencies such as a library, YMCA, recreation department, city government, United Way.
- * independent- registration fees from your participants.

CHECK LIST



The following is a "check list" of important decisions and considerations in planning the free u.:

- ☐ Community needs defined
- ☐ Target audience selected
- ☐ Educational philosophy identified
- ☐ Structure determined- campus, community, independent
- ☐ Fee structure selected
- ☐ Core of staff people ready
- ☐ Personal commitment present
- ☐ Name agreed to
- ☐ Office location chosen
- ☐ Phone hours covered
- ☐ Incorporation initiated
- ☐ Short term money raised
- ☐ Long term financing planned

THE FREE U SESSION

Length

Trial and error will help you determine how long your session should be, but most free universities have found that six to eight week sessions are the most successful. You must remember that people's energy and interest levels begin to regress after a while, so it is important not to drag out your sessions. It is also important to remember that an adult's attitude toward learning is different from that of a college student. Adults are very time conscious and want results fairly quickly.

Many free universities run three or four sessions per year. Some run six to ten. I have found that during my first year two or three sessions were plenty; one in the fall, one starting in February, and summer. As time goes on you will learn the "tricks of the trade" and be able to expand your program.

Finding Teachers

When recruiting teachers it is important to be aware of your audience, the skills they want and the interests they have.

Your recruitment should be specific, as well as general. List the topics you think will be popular, and then look for people who can teach these courses. You should be open to people who have something to offer that you are not in search of. Encourage everybody and anybody to teach.

Where do you find teachers? Every community has numerous places where you can look for teachers. The following is a list of places where you can start looking: Girl/Boy Scouts, church organizations, banks, recreation clubs, libraries, colleges, service organizations, speaker bureaus, police department, fire department, high schools, YWCA/YMCA, theater groups, local newspapers, radio stations, food stores and cooperatives.

How do you do the looking? Candace Cunningham of the Denver Free University states, "There are three effective ways of getting the message out that you need teachers. First, write a press release for your local newspaper. You are starting (or have) something new that can benefit every adult and many kids as well. You are news. So write a release telling everyone what you are and what you are doing. Mention that you are looking for people who would like to teach. Or simply call the reporter at the local paper who writes articles about interesting things in the community and tell him/her your story.

"Another way to get free publicity about your teacher needs is by using public service announcements (PSA's). Every radio station must run a certain number of free public announcements in order to keep their license. Write several 15-60 second announcements and send them off to the radio stations. They will run them for you.

"One really effective way of getting yourself and your need of teachers into the public minds is by word of mouth, both formally and informally. Informally by telling people who tell people who tell people. Formally by hitting all the interesting places in town and talking to them about your organization. Be enthusiastic and make teaching at the free university sound like fun. Once you are well known in the community, teachers will come to you."

Recruited teachers should be given a course description sheet. They can write their own course descriptions, and choose a location, day and time to meet. The free u. staff edits the course descriptions for clarity, conciseness and content.

Finding Space

In finding classroom space, it is important that you use your teachers. Encourage them to teach in their homes, or to find a place in the community that satisfies their needs.

If teachers are having problems finding places, the following have proven successful with a great many free universities: churches, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, libraries, clubs, offices, newspapers, art centers, studios, and cooperatives. Talk to everyone who has space. You should do your classroom space search the same time you are doing your teacher search. As Candace has pointed out, "The classrooms are there, you need to do some footwork."



Catalog

The catalog is essentially what a free university is all about. Many people who are skeptical or unknowledgeable about a free u. decide if they want to get involved by the quality of the catalog.

Duane Conroy, from an article entitled "Helpful Hints for Free Universities," offers these thoughts on publishing a catalog.

Your first step is to collect your copy and graphics. Type up your copy and, as Jane Lichtman points out, be sure that each catalog includes: 1) the name of the free university; 2) the term dates, season and year; 3) registration procedures: when and where (if there is no formal registration, explain that interested persons should call the organizer or the office or just show up at the first class meeting); 4) when the first class begins; 5) charges: if there are no fees, say so; 6) who can participate; 7) philosophy of the free university; 8) where people can get more information: free u. address, phone number, and when someone is there; 9) course information: title, description, organizer, telephone, when and where the class meets, and any limit set by the organizer; 10) graphics; 11) extras, descriptions of other programs and activities, articles, poetry, advertisements.

Your next step should be to determine your audience. Your design and format will depend on the kinds of people who you are trying to reach.

Thirdly, you should determine how much money you want to spend. How much can you budget your catalog and how many people can you get to help you. Divide up jobs. Have some people recruit teachers and find space while others type, do lay out and draw graphics.

Once you are organized you should go and talk to printers. Do not be afraid to ask the printer to explain the whole process of lay out. Have him/her explain the cheapest route. Find out how much time s/he will need to print the catalog, and get an approximate cost. You will need to decide how many catalogs you want to print- this will depend on the population you are trying to reach. You should print at least ten times as many catalogs as the number of registrations you hope for. Make sure to talk to more than one printer; prices fluctuate.

If yours is a small job you can sometimes buy paper stock left over from a larger run. Your printer may also have odd-shaped paper that no one else can use. If you can design your layout around this situation, it could mean considerable savings. The cheapest way to print a catalog is if you lay it out yourself, so make sure that you understand how lay out is done. Ask questions!

Your next step is to decide on how much information you want to communicate. Look at the way other pieces are put together - other free u. catalogs, newsletters, posters, ads, brochures - and determine what it is about their composition that appeals to you. Decide the number of pages you want your catalog to be, so you have to determine what is most important. Try not to crowd up your catalog.

The next step is layout. Draw small rough sketches proportionate to the size of your final piece. Details are not important here; this is only a reference sketch for the layout.

Ask your printer about terms, so that you can specify these on your final layout. Also ask him/her about typesetting costs. It is much cheaper if you do your own typesetting. Borrow a typesetting machine from a school newspaper or community newspaper, or use a carbon ribbon IBM selectric typewriter. There are twenty different type styles available. You can rent these.

Now you are ready to lay out. Type your body with an electric typewriter. Type your copy as it will fit on the layout page. Glue down your final copy including graphics and typesetting. Make sure to have your printer explain inks and papers to you, so that you can pick the ink and paper you like. When laying out use a T-square to align layout - your paper should be even with the edge of the table. Use a blue pencil (invisible to copy camera) to sketch your layout dimensions and notes to the printer. When finished bring your copy to the printer and go over it closely with him/her, so that you can answer any question s/he might have.

ADVERTISING

Many free universities sell ads in their catalogs to pay for printing. Make up an advertising contract and go to stores and ask if they would like to advertise in your catalog. Make sure to tell them prices, your distribution, and where you will be distributing.

Distribution

The success of a free university at mixing people with varying backgrounds is determined by how well they choose the locations for distributing their catalogs.

The most common distribution technique is leaving piles of catalogs in retail outlets (restaurants, liquor stores, and grocery stores). This can be done easily, but this technique has its limits. Counter space is valuable to merchants, and they may be selective and not accept your catalogs or stuff them in a corner, but you should try them.

John Hand suggests that the following are good places: Waiting rooms in hospitals and doctors' offices; laundromats; bargain clothing stores; cheese stores; movie houses and theaters; counseling centers; bakeries and ice cream parlors; delicatessens and pizza places; record stores.

Some free u's mail a catalog to all people who registered the previous term, as well as building a mailing list of people who want to receive the catalog.

Other free u's put full page ads in newspapers. These ads include a listing of courses with times and days, as well as information about registration and where catalogs can be found.

Almost all free universities put articles in the paper announcing that catalogs are available and where they can be picked up. During catalog distribution time, I always carry catalogs with me and hand them out as I walk down the street.

Registration

Most free universities require that people register for courses. Some free u's just list courses and tell people to show up at the first class meeting, but popular courses require pre-registration.

Candace Cunningham offers a super cheap and easy way to do registration. "Use one sheet of paper for each class list for each course. Using either mimeo or ditto, put the course number and the name of the course in the upper right hand corner. Have headings with columns drawn the page for the students' name, phone number and course cost if wanted. Have lines drawn all the way down the paper so that it will be easy for the students to sign up.

"Keep the lists on clipboards, the kind with the metal wires at the top so you can flip through the lists easily. Next to the person taking the money have a master sheet with the course fees on it, listed by number or alphabetical order. As each student signs up, the cashier looks up the fee and writes the course number (or name) and the fee on a 3 X 5 index card. When the student is done, the cashier totals the fees on the card, takes the money, and gives the student the card for a receipt.

"When registration is over, take the lists and xerox them. Then send each instructor a copy of the list and file your copies (you have to keep all financial records at least five years). This method is simple and cheap and can be used for quite a large number of courses. It can also be adapted for several things, including adding statistical information, such as student/nonstudent, simply by adding up the columns. It can also be moved fairly quickly if you want to register in more than one location."

There are many other registration techniques. If you are interested in finding out about them write other free u's.

Publicity

For most free universities, good publicity is a necessity for survival. In order to interest people in your program you must let them know what you have to offer. Publicity can take many forms, and usually the type of publicity you use depends on the community you are trying to reach.

Do not be afraid to saturate the community you are trying to reach. Let people know that the free university is their free u., and that it offers worthwhile and fun courses, programs and activities. Use your imagination and the resources around you and you should be able to invent numerous forms of publicity.

Publicity is a big job and most free u's have one or two people coordinate the free u's publicity. That person(s) will be responsible for keeping a steady flow of publicity going into the community.

In my opinion, the free university's most powerful piece of publicity is its catalog. The following are other methods of publicity that you may be interested in considering.

1) Silkscreen posters - A well done silkscreen poster is a very effective form of publicity in stores, while at colleges and universities hand done posters are usually just as effective if they are placed in strategic places. For towns and cities, I suggest that you check which stores are most commonly used or walked by.

2) New Releases - News releases to radio stations and television stations can be very good advertising. Write a 15, 30 and 60 second release with the essential information and then deliver it to the stations. Make contacts at the stations.

3) Newspaper articles - It is very worthwhile to set up good relations with the newspapers. They have a very wide circulation. The best way to get articles in the newspaper is to write the article yourself and deliver it to the newspaper editor. Make friends with him/her, and explain your program. If you can get newspapers to put a picture and caption of some free u. activity, more people will be aware that you exist.

4) Guerilla Theater - Make people aware that you exist by doing things for and to the community, ie., clean up days, carnivals, strolling minstrels, etc.

5) Word of mouth - Talk up your free u.

6) Stuff mailboxes at colleges and universities with announcements about your special programs and activities.

7) Hang big banners on buildings and across roads announcing registration and special activities.

8) Flyers in dining halls and restaurants - This is easier than stuffing mailboxes and people are more willing to read a flyer while eating.

9) Send letters to community agencies - The Boys Club, the YMCA, Red Cross, and explain to them your program and ask them if they will help advertise the program. It will help if you go to talk to these people.

10) Speak to community groups - Design a slide show and a short talk about your program and then go to the various clubs and ask if you can present a program.

These are just a few suggestions. Sit down with a few friends and in a half hour you will come up with ten more. Remember that publicity for your free u. occurs with each activity or course you hold, so the more varied programs, activities and classes you hold the more people you will be publicizing to. In my opinion, the two most important aspects in publicity are: 1) continual publicity and activities and 2) imagination.

Follow Up & Evaluation

Most free universities have found it important to check up on courses. Many have a meeting (or pot luck dinner) before the session begins. At this gathering, you can talk about what it is like to teach

a course. It is important that you make your teachers feel comfortable and confident.

It is helpful if you give each teacher a telephone number and name to call if there are any problems. Some free u's have a staff member attend a teacher's first class. That staff member is responsible for keeping in touch with the teacher, and helping the teacher evaluate her/his course.

At the end of each session, it is beneficial for the staff to evaluate the session. You should decide the good things that happened, the bad things, and make a list of things you would like to change the next session.

Many free u's find it helpful if course organizers do evaluations of their courses, as well as an evaluation of the free u. administration. Some free u's ask students to do evaluations. All have found that looking back and evaluating their progress is helpful.



ORGANIZATION

Staff

A great many free universities try to find money to pay at least one staff member, because they have found that at least one paid staff member is needed for program development and stability. Free u's connected with colleges can get work study people, while independent free u's pay staff from registration fees.

You should set up an office with a telephone as soon as possible. Campus free u's usually find space at the student union, while community based free u's look in community centers, office buildings and churches. Many independent free u's want their own building, or at least partial use of a building. Ask around and see if there are sympathetic landlords who will give you a discount. Make sure to publicize your office hours and telephone number.

Volunteers

Volunteers can be a great asset to the organization, but they need attention and coordination. Once the free u. gets off the ground, you can attract people who are willing to give a hand. These volunteers usually do not want to be given a great deal of responsibility. Instead, they want to be part of the experiment, a member of the free university.

One very effective way to coordinate volunteers is with a work board. Put up a bulletin board and every time you find a job that needs to be done, e.g., typing, filing, telephone calling, put it on an index card (with specific instructions) and tack the card to the board under the day the job needs to be done by. Have your volunteers sign up for work slots each week. Unless you have a shortage and need a lot of help, two hours per week is plenty.

When the volunteer comes to work, s/he should work on completing assignments for that day. Make sure that some of the jobs are interesting and challenging. If there is no work to be done, make sure that volunteers are called and told. They will become disenchanted if they show up and are given nothing to do.

If you are having problems finding volunteers, put articles in the newspaper and follow other publicity techniques. If this fails, and you are charging fees, offer a fee discount to volunteers.

Volunteers must be supervised. Keep your volunteers busy, and show them you appreciate their help.

Board

A board of advisers lends credibility, experience and a source of advice to the operation. Composed of both respected leaders and "doers" in the community, the board should be made up of a variety of people, such as a businessman, lawyer, minister, social service agency head, housewife, farmer, elderly person, college professor.

Boards meet anywhere from twice a year to monthly, depending on your needs. But more importantly, the free u. coordinator contacts board members individually for their opinions, help, contacts and work. Board members are especially effective in communicating with funding sources, government officials, civic leaders, and the media.

Alliances

The more support you can round up the better. Speak to groups and clubs about the free university and how they can help. Talk to influential individuals and ask them to talk up the free u. Hold community activities that are a service to the community, such as clean up days, square dances, crafts sales. Show people that anyone can become involved with the free university.

Sometimes it is helpful to go to specific people when you are trying to start new projects. For example, get the support of the local arts council behind setting up a film series. Make friends with the mayor and the media and show them the number of people involved and explain the good things you are doing. The more friends you have, the easier time the free university will have staying alive.

Finances

While short term money can be raised from donations, sales and benefits, some plan for the long term maintenance of the free u. will need to be devised.

Regardless of the type of free u. you are running, the first step is to construct a budget for the coming year, and then to decide how you expect to raise that budget. Some ideas:

CAMPUS FREE U

- + Student government allocations. A little "politicking" is usually called for here, both in receiving approval for your budget request and in steering clear of unwanted control.

- + College departments. Some free u's receive a staff salary and support directly from departments, such as a division of continuing education, office of academic services, or student counseling center.

COMMUNITY SPONSORED FREE U

- + The list of potential sponsoring agencies is long, including community center, church, YMCA, library, recreation commission and arts council.

+ Community sponsored free u's can also receive funding, but not sole sponsorship, from a variety of local sources, including the city or county government, United Way, CETA positions, VISTA's, and the like.

INDEPENDENT FREE U's

+ Registration fees are the basic staple of the independent free u. They currently range from a low of \$3 to a high of \$15. The fee must be competitive with other adult education fees. The larger the city, the easier it is to run the operation completely off of participant fees.

+ Other sources of income for the independent include a charge for teachers to list their courses and advertising in the catalog.

SALES AND BENEFITS

All types of free u's can use adjunct projects to raise money, such as an annual arts and crafts fair, benefit concert, sales of T-shirts, coffee mugs, or a used book sale.

GRANTS

Grants can be used for short term funding or to supplement your base of support, but grants are time consuming to obtain and run out after a year or two.

COMBINATIONS

One successful formula for funding has been to use a combination of funding schemes. For example: registration fee, CETA position, book sale, and local foundation grant.

BOOKKEEPING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

It is very important to keep financial books, especially if you are independent and a non-profit organization. Keep your books simple and clear, and use an accounts book. Set up an accounting system that records income (how much you take in, from whom, when) and expenditures (on what money is spent, when). Save your receipts.

One important suggestion to follow is to be precise and keep your books up to date. The best way, but not always the most convenient, is to have one person who is good with figures be the only one who can enter and withdraw funds.

I would suggest that before you start to deal with income and expenditures, that you sit down with an accountant or bookkeeper and ask him/her to help you set up a system and give you hints. Make sure that you understand the Internal Revenue guidelines and what is expected of you as a non-profit organization.

Conclusion

This manual contains a great deal of information with regard to setting up and running a free university. I hope that I have helped you become aware of the different aspects concerning their operation. Now it is up to you to sort out the knowledge you have learned from this manual.

For more information, write the Free University Network for a list of publications.

No two free universities are exactly identical, and your free university, although it may be modeled after another one, will not be a xerox copy. Each community has different needs and wants. I must stress that your background work is very important, so make sure you have thought out the structure of your free u. and you have made contacts with people in your community to find out if they would support the free u. Ask them for suggestions.

The number of free universities is growing with leaps and bounds. Community based education is becoming a reality. People do have something to offer each other, and to learn from each other.

Free universities are conceived in order to become a means of expression, a community's threshold to a new way of getting people together and sharing with each other the most exciting of journeys—the release and sharing of ideas that create growth.

This manual has been written to give you ideas on how to set up a free university. A lot will be learned while setting up your free u., and I wish you good luck with your adventure into community education.

